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UW-Stevens Point history Prof. David Worne, directed a seminar on U.S. assassinations.

Slaying probes 'help cleanse' U.S.

STEVENS POINT, Wis. — Responsible criticism of investigations into the assassinations of President John Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King is a cleansing process for basic institutions in the United States.

Speakers used that theme during a five-day assassination symposium that ended Saturday at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

"THIS IS not a 'who killed Cock Robin' matter," said Harold Weisberg of Frederick, Md., an authority and one of the most prolific authors on the Kennedy and King deaths. Instead, the question should be: How have our basic institutions functioned in regard to the assassinations? he said.

David Wrone, history professor at UW-Stevens Point, who arranged the symposium, said responsible criticism of the government "is a very wonderful thing — you reaffirm in it one of the key postulates of a democracy . . . we can push our nation back on center."

But criticism malfunctioned in the Kennedy assassination case following release of the Warren Commission report, he argued. The "left wing" element in the United States, for example, with a tradition of "standing up and warning of disasters," has "muddled the public mind and done it unwittingly," he said.

WRONE DESCRIBED information on the circumstances surrounding Kennedy's assassination as being as confused and cloudy as it was when it happened 13 years ago, and he said he rejects the Warren report ruling out conspiracy and accusing Lee Harvey Oswald as being the lone gunman.

Wrone said his arguments are based on scholarship and research.